المجلس الاسلامي
Islamic Council

Statement issued by the Islamic Council
on Saudi Arms Purchases.

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Political and military circles are baffled by the recent spate of multi billion dollar deals which the rulers of Saudi Arabia have signed, and plan to sign, with the West for the most advanced weapon systems. A few years ago the Saudi government purchased from the United States more than 60 F-15 advanced combat aircraft complete with missiles, ammunitions and support systems costing several billion dollars. This huge purchase was soon followed by the purchase of a package of 5 AWACS - the world's most advanced and complex airborne warning and control system. That deal too cost the Saudis billions of dollars. Another deal worth 4 billion dollars was signed soon after with France, mainly for naval weapon systems. And now comes the news that Saudi Arabia has decided to sign yet another $3 billion deal with Britain for 48 Tornado advanced combat aircraft and 30 Hawk trainer aircraft, just when the Saudi government is reducing its public spending in other vital fields, to the dismay of the Saudi people.

During the last 10 years Saudi defence spending has topped one hundred and fifty billion dollars. And yet, whenever the time came for the use of these huge arsenals, the Saudi rulers were unwilling or unable to use them. This was made painfully clear during Israel's invasion of Lebanon and the massacres of Sabra and Chatilla. On its past record, it would be unrealistic to expect that the response of the Saudi government would be any different in any future aggression by Israel or its allies. Why then do the rulers of Saudi Arabia continue to throw away colossal sums on the purchase of weapons ?

The Islamic Council is all for mutually beneficial trade and commerce and the strengthening of the defence capability by the Muslim states. Indeed, the defence of Muslim lands is obligatory on all Muslims. What we vehemently condemn is huge spending on the purchase of arms whose purposes are other than the defence and liberation of Muslim lands.

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